Journal of the Amateur Photographic Society of Madras.

Vol. 3.—No. 1. | Price As. 8.

December, 1896.

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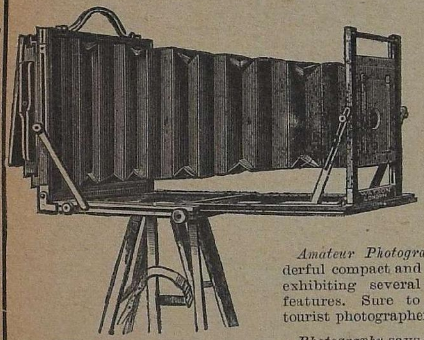

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British Journal of Photography says:—"It folds into a smaller compass, and is lighter and more portable than any pattern we have yet seen.

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Camera and three double slides	9 12 0	10 0 0	12 5 0	14 0 0	16 12 6	21 0 0
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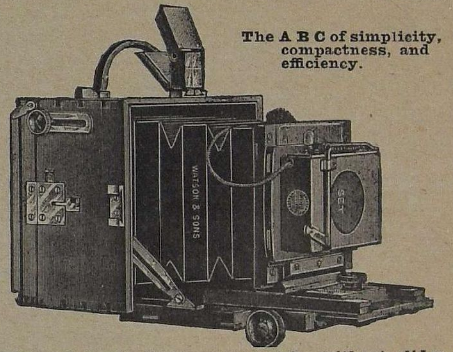

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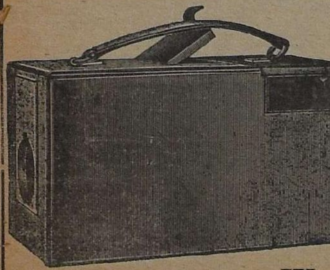

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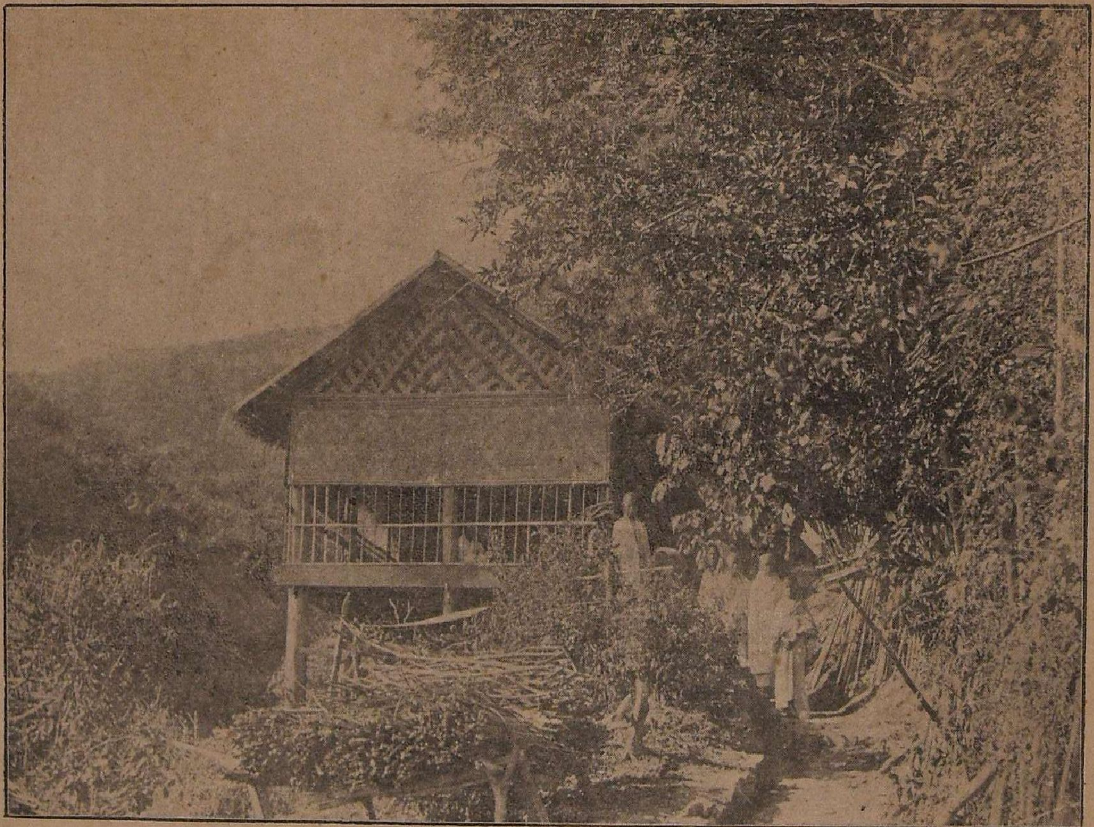

A BURMESE NUNNERY.

Vol. III. No. 1. **December, 1896.**

Journal of the Amateur Photographic Society of Madras.

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EDITORIAL NOTES.

At the beginning of a new year it is well for the editors of a Journal, as for an individual, to glance backwards as well as forwards, and to try to form an estimate both of how far it has succeeded and in what respects it has failed to achieve its objects. If our backward glance at this time is not one of unmixed satisfaction, we can yet say that we have done our best to make the *Journal* of real value to the members of the Society, and we have received from time to time pleasing evidence that we have in some measure been successful. No one is better aware than we are ourselves that in many respects the *Journal* has fallen below the high ideal that we have tried to keep steadily in view, but we can console ourselves for this by the knowledge that an ideal attained is no longer an ideal, and so we can still hope in the coming year to make progress.

Journalism in India is at all times difficult, and the editor has constantly to face the task of filling his columns from a very small supply of the raw material. This is the case even with ordinary journals, but it is still more so in the case of technical journals. In the past year we have been fortunate in obtaining valuable contributions from a number of the members of the Society who deserve our hearty thanks, but after all the proportion of the members who have helped to fill our columns is but small, and the bulk of the work has fallen on the shoulders of the devoted few who have been willing to sacrifice themselves for the common good. Possibly it will always be so, but we live in hope that the beginning of a new year will bring new contributors to tell us their experiences and add to the interest of our pages. The subject of photography is an inexhaustible one, and it can hardly happen that any worker in it does not come upon something that would interest his co-workers. Our ambition is to

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make the journal so useful to our members that they will feel that they cannot get on without it, and this we can only do by the help of the members themselves. A new year is always understood to be a suitable time for good resolutions, and we trust that at this new year many of our readers will resolve that they will do something to add to the interest of this volume—and may we add that we hope such good resolutions will be speedily translated into action and not allowed to share the miserable fate of so many of their kindred. A happy new year to you all, and more power to your lenses and developers!

A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Volume the third, our own new year!
In spite of adverse croaks
Of those who watched us first appear
Beneath the shade of 'Oakes.'

Volume the third, we make our bow!
For now we stand alone;
Two rings of growth, you must allow,
Are something to have grown.

Volume the third, but not the last!
We look for fresh success
If friends again, as in the past,
Will see us through the press.

* * * * *

The amateur, the world has said,
Has really come to stay;
He's not a product fashion-bred,
A creature of a day.

And so, if this benighted stretch
Of India's coral strand
Holds yet an amateur—the wretch!—
Who is not of our band,

Then let him join without delay,
And help with all his might—
Vol. No. III. looks forth to-day
With pages snowy white.

C. S. M.

ACETYLENE, or the new light as it has been called, is at present passing through that stage of reaction, which usually follows a boom. People who are interested in it are getting nervous, on account of accidents which have happened during its use and on account of the recent utterances of those who ought to know. These utterances are however so conflicting just now that an outsider may well feel bewildered and may hesitate to recommend the use of an illuminant alleged to be fraught with such serious risks. Insurance Companies are already advised to charge a risk rate for buildings in which the gas is going to be used, and some of them do not allow its use at all on premises which they insure. This must prove a serious check upon the extended use which was predicted for this gas as an illuminant for lantern and other photographic uses during the present winter at home.

We recently brought to the notice of our readers a new generator and gas holder for acetylene called the Incanto which Messrs. Thorn and Hoddle had placed on the market. It has since been exhibited at a meeting of the Royal Photographic Society by Mr. Hoddle, who confidently recommended the gas as an absolutely safe thing to be handled, as safe as an ordinary candle, if used with ordinary care and intelligence; but he said that an efficient generator was essential and that cylinders of the compressed gas should be avoided. He ridiculed the attitude taken up by the Insurance Companies. At the discussion which followed, and since then, it has been justly pointed out that acetylene is auto-explosive, being capable of decomposing into products which occupy a volume many times greater than the original volume with evolution of heat, that it forms explosive compounds with silver and with copper, and hence brass or silver-plated fittings are dangerous, and that the exact conditions which determine the explosion of this gas or the formation of the explosive compound with copper are unknown. On the other hand it is urged that the acetylene compound with copper is very rarely produced, and even then only in such small quantities that if it were to go off at all it would do so only in a little puff; that many experimenters have made, and worked with, the gas for several years without any sort of explosion occurring, and that the risk is practically of no moment. Professor Vivian B. Lewes, who was the first to draw public attention in England to the newly discovered source of this gas, and who is an authority on the subject, is reported to have stated that the danger lies not in the direct formation of explosive metallic compounds with the gas, which when pure does not attack copper and other metals, but in the presence of large quantities of impurities which are generated from impure

calcium carbide and attack the metal, thus giving rise to compounds which the acetylene is capable of attacking with the formation of an explosive compound.

It is unfortunate that the introduction of acetylene should be accompanied by the disasters which have been reported. At the Pictet works in Paris serious damage to buildings and the loss of three lives followed the explosion of a cylinder of the gas. It is reported that the men were checking returned cylinders, which were supposed to be empty, and that the effects of the explosion were similar to those which follow an explosion of dynamite.

It would be a pity if so conveniently generated and so good an illuminant for lantern work were to fall into disrepute from causes like the above. Though these accidents must shake confidence in the cylinders of the compressed gas, there should be no diffidence in using the gas from a portable apparatus from which brass fittings are excluded, and from which the gas is burned as fast as it is generated, provided the apparatus is effective in preventing admission of air into the generator. The production of any illuminant of high intensity, for lantern work, is a matter which requires a certain amount of skill and care; and it is quite probable that acetylene will ultimately recover from the sweeping condemnations which threaten to stop its progressive use.

IN the Society's question box was found, some time ago, a question asking for information how to remove from a photographic plate an imprint of a portion of the newspaper in which the plate had been wrapped. That question was never answered, and such impressions are said to be indelible. The *Photographische Rundschau* (quoted by the *British Journal*) states that this impression can be removed by bathing the plates before development in a two per cent. solution of acetic acid and well washing with water and then treating with an alcohol bath. This, it will be seen, is rather a precautionary than a curative method of treatment; and for that matter the best way after all would be to avoid wrapping the plate in newspaper.

ONE of the lessons to be learnt from a study of the statistics of printing processes, employed by exhibitors at the recent Pall Mall exhibition, is that platinum printing continues to hold the lead which it took some years back. Of course this cannot be taken as an index of the advance which platinum printing is making generally among all sorts and conditions of photographers, for, with the remarkable extension of platinum printing which has already taken place, the sale of chloride papers also has increased annually by leaps and bounds. Commercially the most important advance is evidently with the latter class of printing papers and this must naturally be so, for the bulk no doubt use these papers; but from the exhibition point of view the case is quite the reverse. Works accepted and hung at these exhibitions are acknowledged best, and we may fairly regard the methods by which those works have been produced as those which are the best means of giving expression to them.

The following summary is taken from a statement given by *Photography*. The proportion of platinum prints was 43½ per cent. against 40 and 34 in the two preceding years. So that this printing method was adopted for nearly half of all the pictures exhibited. This is not to be wondered at when the permanence and the artistic facilities of the method are considered. Carbon printing also seems increasing, for it had advanced from 18 per cent. three years ago to 23 per cent. in the following year, and this year their proportion is 29 per cent. Bromide prints, though much the same in number as last year (six to seven per cent.), have declined to about half the number in which they were exhibited four years ago. The proportion of the usual silver prints has steadily decreased, the figures for the past four exhibitions being 29, 24, 17 and 13 per cent. It is also noteworthy that all medals awarded at Pall Mall this year have been given either to platinum or to carbon prints Three years ago, three medals were given to silver prints, next year two, last year one, and this year none—a gradual extinction of the weakest in the evolution of the fittest and most permanent printing methods.

A METHOD of obtaining vigorous prints from weak negatives is mentioned in *Photography*. Negatives lacking density can of course be intensified, but many workers do not attempt what is considered a doubtful process. To obtain a crisp and vigorous print from an over-exposed grey negative, a collodio-chloride paper, under the name of *Vindobona-Rembrandt*, has been put on the market at Vienna. The paper is said to do all that is claimed for it, and

Photography states that the vigor of the prints is due to the presence of a small quantity of a bichromate in the paper. Ordinary gelatino-chloride papers were immersed for a few seconds in weak alcoholic solution of ammonium bichromate ($1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1000), they dried in a few minutes, and gave prints equal to those obtained by the new paper. The process is said to be applicable to any printing-out paper, and members may be glad of this tip. If anyone tries the method, we hope the results will be sent to us for inspection.

THERE are signs on all hands of the strength of the position which photography is taking up as a fine art. The most recent phase of the progress made in this direction is a gradual development of what is called the one-man show. The man who attempted even five years ago to come before the public with a picture gallery of photographs, all his own work, would have been bold indeed. Last year Mr. W. M. Warneuke gave, by invitation, an exhibition of his work at Glasgow, and now Mr. Craig Annan has followed in the same path. Mr. Annan's reputation is young, for only three years ago the *Studio* in reproducing one of his pictures remarked that he was a 'consummate artist whose individuality was surprising, but who, seemed to have been quite unknown before. Now his reputation is European. His collection on view included fifty pictures of various subjects, portraits, landscapes, seascapes, genre studies. It has been well received, and its success may be judged in the suggestions which have been put forward by the photographic press that the collection should be sent on view to other cities. One of the papers says that, apart from the intrinsic merits of the pictures themselves, the exhibition is rich in artistic suggestiveness, for the room itself is draped in a unique manner, the frames are hung with a due sense of harmony, and the frames themselves show how far it is possible to support the colour schemes of their contents.

When matters develop to such a pitch as this and public opinion permits a photographer to pose as an artist whose works are worth going to see, it is evident that photographic art has intrinsic claims to be recognised as an art and that its position as such is getting firmer every year, despite the attacks of jealous hypercritics who deny the claims of such work to a place among the fine arts.

THE *Glasgow Evening News* tells us one or two things about Mr. Annan's method of work which it may be well to take note of:—

" Mr. Annan's early successes were achieved with transcripts from Dutch landscapes, one of his first pictures to attain notoriety being a unique treatment of " The beach at Zandvoost," a copy of which is included in the present exhibition. If a photographer lacking the artistic eye had attempted this picture the usual result of a monotonous horizon line cutting the composition into two halves would have followed; but Mr. Annan selected his point of view so that that objectionable line was broken by the mast and sail of a boat, and by the well-grouped figures on the shore. In another way this picture illustrates Mr. Annan's method in a characteristic manner. The original photograph was taken on a whole-plate; the exhibited picture is some thirty inches long by about seven wide. The process of evolving the larger picture from the smaller photograph is the sphere in which the camera-man's artistic temperament works. If he lacks that temperament the picture will not evolve; it will remain a photograph. Some ill-advised friends of photography declaim against the intervening process; they want the pure, untouched negative, and the whole of it, down to its smallest superficial area. Well, let them have it; there are only too many willing to oblige; and they never will learn that in some cases the part is greater than the whole. In photography it is seeing the part that *is* greater than the whole, which is the proof of the artistic spirit; for the lens is so omnivorous that it embraces many things better left out. The selective intuition is very strongly developed in Mr. Annan; as a general rule—there are one or two exceptions—he knows how to wield the trimming knife to effective purpose. But the evolution is not complete when the original photograph is denuded of its disturbing elements. High lights need to be toned down, and weak tones to be heightened; a new and enlarged negative must be made from the worked-up picture; a suitable colour for the printing process has to be carefully considered; and, finally, the whole to be framed with a due sense of harmony in lines and colour scheme. Each step in this evolution, save one, calls for the exercise of artistic insight; and yet the hypercritic denies the claim of work so produced a place among the fine arts!"

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Regarding the framing of Mr. Annan's pictures, it is said that many fine mouldings have been made to his design, and the colours used in staining them range through various shades of brown to black, green, and white; that *not a single mount is used*, for large pictures are framed up close with mouldings of various widths and small pictures have either dark narrow frames or frames of such width that the effect of a mount is gained in a much more effective way than by the usual method.

SOME time ago, on the death of the late Mr. Traill Taylor, we appealed to our members on behalf of the memorial which it was proposed to get up in honour of the man who had done such a great deal in the cause of photography. Our Society had the pleasure of contributing its mite towards the movement, and members may be glad to know what has been done in the matter. The Committee, in London, entrusted with the carrying out of the idea, discussed the various proposals put before it, and they have finally decided :—

"1. That the annual revenue of the fund be devoted to an award of a medal for a lecture on a subject connected with photography, and preferably embodying original research, to be known as the Traill Taylor Memorial Lecture and available for use by any photographic society in Great Britain.

"2. That the fund be administered by a committee of ten London and ten country members. Two London and two country members to retire annually, and not to be eligible for re-election for twelve months. The annual retirement to be by lot until retirement by seniority can come into force. Any alteration in this clause to be effected only by the vote of at least four-fifths of the entire committee.

"3. The committee to appoint a secretary annually, not necessarily from their own body, who shall be *ex-officio* a member of the committee. The secretary to hold office during the pleasure of the committee.

"4. That the fund be vested in two trustees, to be chosen by the committee; the trustees to be *ex-officio* members of the committee.

"5. That a trust deed be executed embodying the above regulations."

The idea appears to be that the competitors should embody their work in the form of a paper, and that the medalled paper should be read as a lecture in London and in the provinces, and a copy of it should be available for any Photographic Society in Great Britain. A mixed committee of gentlemen from London and the provinces was then formed to carry out these resolutions. While we think that this is as good a way as any of doing honour to the memory of so honourable a man, we cannot help noticing that to make the use of the medalled paper available to "any Photographic Society in Great Britain" is to restrict it in a way in which the appeal for subscriptions was not restricted. There may be some good reason for excluding Societies "abroad" from the privilege, and perhaps the response from abroad was not sufficiently strong to entitle it to the same consideration as the home Societies; but this seems hardly the way to encourage greater sympathy in future.

THE familiar word "Solio" is just now going through a peculiar phase of its existence, and the Eastman Company are threatened with a big bill of costs over it. They wished to register the title of their photographic paper as a trade mark and the Controller refused their application. The Act permits the registration of "An inventive word or words, or a word or words having no reference to the character or quality of the goods, and not being a geographical name," and objection was taken on the ground that the word indicated "the character and quality of the goods." The Eastman Company appealed to have the Controller's objection rescinded, and submitted through counsel that the word 'Solio' had no reference to the character or quality of the goods, for the word might be used even with reference to a greenhouse. The Judge however held it to be otherwise, and said that applications to register any device of the sun, or any word indicating the sun, in connection with photographic apparatus, had hitherto been persistently refused. The Eastman Company are going to appeal, and their case seems to be one of great hardship.

MANY forms of tubes for the production of X rays are in the market, but we notice that Messrs. W. Watson and Sons have brought out a tube which possesses some advantages over those already existing. The advantages claimed for this tube, which is called the

"Penetrator," are that the anode is constructed of a metal which occludes hydrogen, so that by warming the tube the stored gas can be liberated if the vacuum becomes too high; that the terminals are very strongly made, and those who have had trouble from breakage of weak terminals can appreciate this advantage; and that the electrodes are widely separated, so that all fear of sparking outside the tube is done away with. The arrangement inside the tube is also somewhat different from the usual focus tube. The cathode is small, while the anode consists of a ring placed in a line between the cathode and the platinum reflector which is insulated from the anode. The action of the ring it seems is to concentrate the whole cathode stream upon the platinum reflector, and the glow does not fill the whole tube but only that portion of it which is illuminated by the reflection from the platinum disc. The brilliance of this tube is said to be quite remarkable, and the exposure about half of that required with the ordinary focus tube. Mr. Wilson Noble, whose magnificent radiographs of the body are noted, says: "With a 4 inch spark I can get results superior to other tubes taking 10 inch."

OUR Illustration is from a negative by Mrs. McNair, one of our most enthusiastic and artistic members. We wish that more of our lady members would help us a little, even with an illustration as Mrs. McNair has kindly done. She has given us the following interesting details regarding the subject of the picture:—"This nunnery was one of a cluster of huts, among the Sagaing hills, on the banks of the Irrawaddy, near Mandalay. They are all inhabited by nuns who live by begging, but unlike the monks do not scruple to ask or take money. Their heads are shaven, they wear a pale salmon pinkish garment and are as a rule excessively plain. The girls' schools are under their management, and I read in one of the newspapers that Government has found in Upper Burmah that the girls' schools started there by Government are better attended if nominally placed under the management of a nun, than if managed only by a certificated teacher. The nunneries look very comfortless abodes beside the beautifully carved wooden structures of the monks (Hpoongyee Kyoungs, as they are called) but are such a picturesque addition to nearly every Burmese village."

We have only to add that the block was processed by Messrs. Thacker Spink & Co. of Calcutta.

WE would remind members that the Society's next half-yearly competition takes place next month, and that all competing pictures should be in the hands of the Honorary Secretary "by the last day of January." For the benefit of those who have mislaid their copies of the Rules, we give below a summary of them; but members wishing for further information should address the Honorary Secretary. We propose to give hereafter a summary of these rules on the last page of every issue of the Journal, as suggested by C. S. M., so that members may have ready access to them.

The competition is at present divided into two classes: "large" (whole plate and above) and "small"; and for each of these two classes one silver and one bronze medal will be given, provided the exhibits are worthy of such distinction. Further, the Judges may award certificates of merit to deserving exhibits which are not medalled. For the next competition, the subject is "A Landscape." In addition to the above-mentioned awards, the Judges may award one silver and one bronze medal and certificates of merit for "excellence in copying, enlarging, lantern slides, or any other special branch of photography." An exhibit which has already competed here cannot compete again, but pictures exhibited elsewhere may compete; and lantern slides must compete in sets of six. No competitor may send more than six pictures to compete for one prize, though he may send different exhibits and compete in all classes. Each picture must have a title, and according to present rules "shall be mounted but not framed." It should also be accompanied by a certificate stating that "the (1) arranging, (2) exposing, (3) developing, (4) retouching (if any) and (5) printing" were all done by the exhibitor without assistance.

Certain alterations in the existing rules have been proposed, and any member wishing to suggest alterations would do well to address the Honorary Secretary without delay; but any changes which may be made in the rules will not affect the competition in January next.

THE question of the artistic possibilities of lantern slides continues to excite much interest and the photographic papers allude

to the subject. Mr. J. A. Hodges, a veritable whale among minnows, writes on the subject in the *Amateur Photographer* and his words are so much to the point, and so authoritative in matters relating to lantern slides, that we quote them in full :—

"From sundry conversations with those whose opinions upon the point are entitled to consideration and respect, I gather that many concede that the limitations of the process of producing a lantern slide are not such as to render the production of one that is artistic an impossibility, but it is contended that, for some reason or other, which at present has not been very clearly stated, artistic lantern slides are very rarely to be met with. My own opinions are entirely in accord with this view, which any unbiassed person must admit is the true one, for surely it would be most illogical to condemn a certain method of picture making simply because the majority of its exponents lacked sufficient skill to do full justice to it. Doubtless the vast majority of the lantern slides that are made and exhibited are topographical—or something worse—in character, but the same may with equal truth be said of other kinds of photographs. The cardinal faults, unquestionably, are undue brilliancy and want of tonality. These, however, are by no means inherent in the process, but are due partly to ignorance and want of taste in the slide maker, and partly to a misconception of what the attributes of a good slide should be. For some inconceivable reason it has come to be accepted as an axiom that all lantern slides, irrespective of the subject they are intended to portray, should possess certain qualities : clear glass high lights, absolute freedom from veil, great range of gradation, brilliance, and sparkle. It is well that we should be able to produce a slide exhibiting such qualities when they are desirable, but that we should in all cases be slavishly bound by them would be carrying the dogma of technique too far. I can see no reason why *any* effect which is producible in a print should not be equally possible of realisation in a lantern slide. The only desiderata for its attainment are a perfect mastery of the process employed, and a *judicious* disregard of the conventional canons of technique. The pictorial effect of a lantern slide is largely dependent upon the manner in which it is projected, and this doubtless constitutes one of the most important limitations of the process. The intensity of the light, the size of the picture, and its distance from the audience are all potent factors in the excellence or otherwise of the result. More, however, depends upon the quality of the slide than upon any other consideration in connection with the subject. The majority of slides are too brilliant and sparkling. Only the other day I was asked the pertinent question, "Why does sunlit foliage in a lantern-slide or an enlargement so often look like snow?" The answer is to be found in the fact that the original negative was of rather too "plucky" a type, and probably slightly under-exposed, whichfaults are accentuated in the reproduction (be it lantern slide or enlargement) by giving rather too short an exposure and using too strong a developer. Full exposure, nay, over-exposure, and a weak, *very weak*, developer, will give a quality in lantern slides not easily otherwise obtainable."

DR. MACINTYRE writes to the *Lancet* and also to *Nature*, describing a method of taking radiographs which obviates the use of large plates. When large portions of the body are to be radiographed, the question of expensive plates becomes an important one, and a method which reduces this expense fulfils a distinct want. Further, a radiograph taken in the ordinary way, even of a small portion of the body, is larger than the object itself, and lantern slides of such a picture must necessarily be made by reduction. This involves time and material too, which Dr. Macintyre's method will save. A fluorescent screen is set up in such a position that the shadow of the object to be radiographed is in good focus upon it. He then photographs this shadow and the screen by means of the camera and lens in the ordinary way. He gives at four feet distance an exposure of about two minutes, which would be short for a direct radiograph. He found however that the X rays had penetrated the fluorescent screen and the front board of the camera, giving a shadow of the lens and its metallic mounting. He got over this difficulty by intercepting the X rays which passed through the fluorescent screen by covering the camera front with lead sheeting having a hole in it through which the lens was pointed. He points out that while we are crying out for better tubes we are not utilising all the X rays that the present tubes supply, and he suggests that fluorescent screens should be more thickly coated. He has tried this with success.

THERE are extraordinary rumours of the immense fortunes which are being made by means of the cinematograph: and it is quite possible that those who took advantage of the tide have made a good thing of it. It won't be for want of pluck if Mr. Stevenson, of the Madras Photographic Stores, does not earn something more than cudos for his enterprise in securing, at the very first available moment, the possession of the necessary apparatus and films for showing the animated photographs in Madras. His luck unfortunately, so far as Madras is concerned, was not equal to his pluck, for although he gave three shows here the weather was such that hardly anyone could venture out of doors except from a downright sense of duty, and so the audiences were very scanty. We hope however that his exhibition in other parts of the country will be more successful financially than they could be under the circumstances in Madras. Several of the pictures shown were very good, particularly the river steamers, a train entering a station with the usual jostling of passengers getting in and out, and the skirt dancers, others, while a few were foggy even with the lime-light which Mr. Stevenson employed. This is a difficulty which is no doubt inherent in the films used, which we believe are the ordinary films coated for negative work. During the intervals between each animated photograph, a number of beautiful lantern slides of the ordinary kind were thrown on the screen.

MAXIMS FOR THE AMATEUR.

IV.—Disillusion and the Dark Room.

When poetry of early years, and zeal
  For photographic skill your soul could feel,
And when, Oh! Amateur, the meanest thing
  'Pertaining to your art a joy could bring,

The dark room seemed the temple of your art,
  Wherein, as priest, you played a serious part,
Performing, as it were, a solemn rite,
  Beneath the dim (and red) religious light.

'Twas there you invoked from out the formless void
  Of filmed glass or coated celluloid
Visions of beauty—conjured up from where?
  "A very magic mirror" you declare!

'Twas then an ever new and glad surprise
  To see the image on the plate arise,
Obedient, like the fabled genii,
  When you the potent formula apply.

Proudly you worshipped at your hobby's shrine,
  Accepting boastfully the ample sign
That toleration holds her gentle sway
  Among the orthodox in art to-day.

(Else, without doubt, dark room and crimson flame
  Had earned for you unenviable fame,
Like theirs who dabbled in unholy lore,
  The 'Black Art,' several centuries before.)

* * * * * * *

When poetry and youth have had their day,
  When laurels won begin to fade away,
No longer priest are you of magic lore,
  The marvels of your craft appeal no more.

The world, too tolerant, e'en 'gangs her gait,'
  And little recks she of your mental state;
She may esteem you *madder* than the crowd,
  But not with powers mysterious endowed.

No misty glamour magnifies your worth,
  From lofty heights you sink to sordid earth,
Your art, a broken toy, will e'en refuse
  A wedding or a picnic to amuse.

Your dark room now no longer you enthrals—
  'Tis but a chamber full of chemicals—
Or else with damaged negatives in view
  Alas! a chamber full of horrors too!

There's still a lower depth that you may plumb,
  For, in despair, you may at last become
A dilettante, glad to spend your days
  Engrossed by Röntgen's "X"ecrable rays.

* * * * * * *

Thus things grow old, your idols fall to bits,
  And 'Disillusion' on the fragments sits.
What would you give for a Utopia, where
  Nor toys, nor love, nor hobbies need repair?

Well then, my friends, in season just a word,
  Such as from pulpits you perchance have heard;
'Tis not the soul of things that changes ever,
  Only the scope or turn of your endeavour.

Seek not to gild the husks of art forsooth,
  Worship no idols, but the living truth:
Though sticking to th' mechanics of your art,
  Idealise alone the better part.

C. S. M.

OUR HOME LETTER.

As I write our two great English Exhibitions are on the eve of closing their doors. At the one, the Smoking Concert, where so many artists in photography meet and chat, has been held; at the other, the distribution of medals and the annual address of the President have taken place. One of the most interesting points in this address was the upsetting of a theory which has long been held by photographers, to the effect that a longer exposure made up for lack of intensity. It appears from Captain Abney's experiments that the material in slow plates is less susceptible of chemical decomposition in feeble light, that is to say, a slow plate responds less to the ex-

posure when the light is feeble than when it is bright. This important investigation ought to be kept in mind and rapid plates used when circumstances demand it.

Apropos of the exhibition, we have had the usual debate on art *versus* technique, or on matters which resolve themselves into the same thing, in the weekly journals, and also at the club meetings. It is the old weakness over again of each man wanting to put a subject into one of his own particular pigeon-holes. It seems impossible for the majority to make an accurate estimate of quality, either the thing is black or white, there is no intermediate range of colour in their philosophy, and so photography must be either an art or a science, according to the views of the particular individual. Only a few exceptionally clear-sighted men can place it in its right position between the two.

Writing of the art aspect of photography, there is some intrinsic quality about a pictorial photograph not easy to define, but evident enough notwithstanding giving rise to particular sensations in the mind which neither paintings nor sculpture can convey; not that for a moment would we compare them, or even place photographic art on the same level as the other two mentioned. But what we do think, however, is that, as a means of expression, photography has its own peculiar charm, that to compare it with other arts is in a degree odious, though at the same time inevitable, because the newer method, or the newer art, must of necessity be compared with the elder, since how otherwise can judgment be based. Notwithstanding the objectionable comparison involved, and the less lofty position of photography in the scale of arts, there can be no manner of doubt that after thirty years of acquaintance with it, in its pictorial aspect particularly, the world would feel the loss most keenly, if by some means the inventions of Niepce, Fox-Talbot, and their successors were to be swept away from the face of the earth; and so to our mind these representations of the effects of nature, these pourtrayals of the less obvious beauties of the human face and figure, are in every way unique, and as they are also honest and good, we hope to witness year by year continued progress in this direction. So we look forward to the exhibitions of next year with pleasureable anticipation.

Turning from art to practice, it is remarkable, if one should neglect any particular method for awhile, how soon the mind forgets important details, and the hand loses its dexterity of manipulation. Having used bromide and other papers requiring no toning for some years, for the first time a few days ago I set to work to tone a batch of fifty or sixty prints of different sizes, and having prepared a bath containing some 2½ grains of gold chloride, I proceeded to pass the prints through it in the usual manner. But there are limits to the strength and endurance of a toning bath, and I remembered afterwards that a grain of gold will only tone about the equivalent of a sheet of paper, consequently the last dozen or two of the prints would not tone at all, and as I was without further ingredients for the bath, I was compelled to fix them without toning, and put up with their very warm hue, particularly objectionable with highly glazed papers, but by no means so in the case of matt papers, in fact rather the contrary. The ordinary matt chloride papers now on the market give a very nice warm brown colour when fixed without intermediate toning, and for a long time past I have made all my prints by this method. It is more expeditious, and spoils are less frequent, seeing that the most ticklish proceeding, the toning, is omitted. I plunge the prints without any preliminary washing straight into a fixing bath of ordinary strength. As soon as a mottled appearance, which they show on holding up to transmitted light, begins to disappear, then the fixation is complete. The longer they are left in the hyposulphite after this, the colder becomes the shade of brown. I have mentioned this before, but there will be no harm in giving it again more fully.

MATTHEW SURFACE.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY.

Monthly Meeting, held at the Masonic Hall, Mount Road.

Friday, December 4th, 1896.

Mr. F. Dunsterville, President, *in the chair.*

PROPOSAL OF NEW MEMBER.

Surgeon-Major J. L. VanGeyzel proposed and Mr. J. L. Walker seconded—

Surgeon-Major-General C. Sibthorpe.

and he was duly elected to be a member of the Society.

PICTURES FOR THE DAY.

There was a great falling off in the number of exhibits, but considering the long continuance of the heavy rains last month, this was scarcely surprising.

The following members showed pictures of "A DOG":—H. H. The Elayah Rajah of Travancore, Mrs. Leet Palk, Mrs. E. E. Shaw and Mr. P. J. Rose.

The Honorary Secretary exhibited a number of samples of mounts for Christmas and New Year Cards from Messrs. Babajee Sakharam & Co., Bombay.

NEXT MEETING

will be the Annual Meeting, which will be held on 8th January.

The Picture Subject for the meeting in February will be "EVENING."

Photographic Excursion during the Christmas Holidays.

Adverting to a suggestion made in the Society's Journal for last month, the Honorary Secretary said that he had not received any communication from members, and it was decided that he should send Reply Post Cards to members resident in Madras asking if they would join in an excursion to Vellore on 29th and 30th December, leaving Madras by the mail train on 29th and returning in time for dinner on the 30th

EXTRACTS.

Selection.

By F. M. S.

The whole art of photography can be described in one word—that word is selection. The greater the skill exercised in selection the more perfect the photograph. Not only is it necessary to pick set the most perfect or typical models, to choose the most satisfactory point of view, and the best angle of lighting, but when more than one exposure be made—and where is the photographer who is content with one exposure only ?—selection of the best negative or print from its inferiors is imperative. Unfortunately, few have sufficient courage to carry this selection far enough, and the consequence is that, instead of a few first-rate pictures, many second and third rate in quality are sent out into the world.

Now that there are so many cameras astir, the need for very careful selection becomes every day more imperative, for no one now can be expected to be interested in anything which is not above the average, and a neglect of the practice of weeding out every negative which has not a new tale to tell will prevent the photographer from exercising to the best of his power the necessary selection of subject, etc., when out with the camera. Not only so, but the exhibition, if only among friends, of second-rate work prevents the photographer from rising in the estimation of his brother photographers. We say his brother photographer advisedly, for no one but a photographer knows or cares whether sun-pictures are good or bad; we have only to listen to the remarks of those who are not photographers about photographs to be convinced of the truth of this. Who are the giants among photographers? The men whose output is unlimited? who weary their friends with innumerable "*attempts*," and who cannot find it in their heart to throw in the fire all which does not thoroughly satisfy their expectations—hardly. The men whose work we are always most eager to see are those who exercise their skill in selection most heroically, who throw aside without hesitation all which they think is not up to the mark. Stop! says the student, what bothers me is to know what to select and what to reject, and it is with the hope of gaining information that I show such a quantity of work. So far, so good, but the student may be asked if he always does what he can, be it ever so little, in weeding out, and if he always takes in good part the advice offered to him as to which to burn and which to frame. We are afraid he does not, and the most wholesome lessson he can have, where he gets not only the benefit of the advice of one but the collective wisdom of many, too often raises only a feeling of resentment and a wish to kick everyone all round, instead of a feeling of thankfulness to those whose experience enables them to advise and point out the right way. We mean, of course, the immense benefit the young photographer derives from submitting his work to those exhibitions, such as the Royal and the Dudley Gallery, where a selection is made, where quality and not quantity is the watchword. Yet against this healthy discipline some accuse their advisers of impartiality, and they rush into print, saying how they had paid "10*s*. or 12*s*. for carriage, and had all returned." Here, again, we see the need for selection. Just imagine what a large number of framed photographs can be sent from one end of the country to the other for "10*s*. or 12*s*." The selecting bodies of our exhibitions are only human after all, and when they have a hundredweight of stuff, all framed alike, it is only natural for them to say," Oh, send that lot back to where it came from," and to ask the man who sent it to remember that if every exhibitor where to submit such a quantity we should have to sit here for six months instead of six days. Even the selection committees of the Royal and of the Salon err, to our mind, in hesitating to refuse weak work, and even the best exhibition reminds us too much of the beach photographer, whose caravan is covered from steam to stern with, apparently, a print of every photograph he has ever taken. Of course, every one's standard of taste is different, but when half-a-dozen photographers find it impossible to answer among themselves why certain prints have been thought worthy of being hung, the advisability of an explanatory note in the catalogue giving the reasons why the print found favour in the eyes of the hangers and selectors might be advisable. When awards are made, we venture to think that the judges should *always* point out the reason for their decision. The very fact that a certain print pleases them should not be considered sufficient, but even if this rule were made imperative it might be the means of merely showing the ignorance of the judges, as was the case at the late Chicago Exhibition, where many of the judges expressed their reasons for making certain awards in words which only proved that they, the judges, knew nothing of the things they had been appointed to adjudicate upon.

Selection is exercised, too, in another way, with the cutting-knife. The late J. W. Ramsden, a man who saw much farther than most photographers, was constantly advising the use of square plates; he was undoubtedly right. Not that the whole of the plate need be printed; but the very fact of having a square plate makes the worker think about the best shape and size of the print, and so exercise those selective abilities he has been endowed with. Just as the skilled hand may be seen in selecting two good photographs out of a hundred, so may his capability be noticed in the way he trims his prints, unsparing sacrifice, cutting away every inch which is useless. Sometimes a large negative may have to be cut down to a few inches in size. At every photographic exhibition we see examples of works often imperfect when taken altogether, but which contain a jewel embedded in clay. The wish to cover up the useless part has been so irresistible that we have often made a mask, in the form of a view meter, the more thoroughly to enjoy the precious morsel without its detracting surroundings.

Out of doors, that is, in landscape work, the work of selection is often merely a question of waiting and watching, but with figure and portrait work the photographer can do more; he can pick and choose his models. It is said that one professional photographer even picks his sitters; at least, he refuses to take anyone whom he thinks will not do him credit. Not only can the photographer select his models, but he can, when he knows how, as Captain Puyo has shown us, command success by choosing the models, dresses, and surroundings. Photographers too often leave to chance the accessories and dress of their figure studies; no wonder, then, that so many are imperfect.

To be able to exercise the faculty of selection in the most perfect degree, it is necessary that the photographer should have a high ideal. The beauty which is supposed to exist in the eye of the beholder should ever be trained to prefer the perfect to the imperfect. In most cases, a sympathetic chord is struck when the photographer is in the presence of what is beautiful, and what we call selection is only a response from ourselves to that which struck us first.—*Photography.*

Frames.

By Eustace Calland.

The framing of photographs has undergone considerable revolution during the past few years, and especially since the first exhibition of the Photographic Salon. The most prominent cause of this change was the unsatisfactory appearance of an exhibition of pictorial photography treated in the manner general in pre-Salon times, when an expanse of light-coloured mounts surrounded every print. A feeling of irritation is engendered by the aspect of large numbers of more or less dark patches environed by areas of white or light contrasting colours. This is less felt with black and white drawings, still less with charcoal sketches and line etchings, simply because they make less uniform patches of dark, but they are nevertheless irritating when so framed and hung together in quantities.

Now, the appearance of the Salon Exhibition is quiet, sombre, perhaps, but harmonious, close framing in colour harmony with the print being in the ascendant, whilst the few light frames help to dispel monotony. Primarily, of course, a picture is made for the walls of a room or permanent gallery, and should be considered *sui generis* as regards its frame, but, fortunately, a frame or mount of subdued colour, which is most suitable to the majority of photographs, is also most conducive to the good appearance of an exhibition.

Another reason for close framing is that a stronger effect is for some subject obtained, a more decorative unity, a more intimate harmony with the peculiar photographic image. Pencil

and wash drawings, charcoal sketches, or the impress from a copper-plate are far easier to frame effectively than the delicate tone drawing of the sun's rays. In the case of the latter the entire surface is tinted more or less deeply with the photographic pigment, and the contrasts everywhere are comparatively slight. The untouched ground visible throughout in the etching or charcoal work on Michalet or other rough paper, gives them a more related character to the surrounding mount, and allows greater latitude in its selection. We must be especially careful not to overweight the photographic print with a frame that is too dark, or too bold, or too massive, since our local contrasts are so small in comparison with the hand work referred to; nor, on the other hand, by too great lightness of tone or colour, suggest by contrast a feeling of murkiness and absence of daylight.

No rules can be formulated that would be of sufficient general application to be useful. Vaguely, indeed, the lines to be followed may be indicated, for the principles that underlie all design are of application here also. It should be recollected that a frame has usually a twofold purpose; to dissociate the picture in some measure from its surroundings, so that we may enjoy it the more uninterruptedly, and to enhance its beauty and character by such decorative features as shall close the rhythm of the whole without undue harshness when the eye wanders to the margin. The nearer the approach to realism, the more complete must be the separation from the surrounding space; the more abstract our treatment of nature the more freedom will follow for decorative fancy in the setting.

Some of the character of the picture may be allowed to stray out into its border. The theme, let us say, is nature in a high key, streaming sunlight, crisp alternations of sunny spaces and shadow spaces, a sense of movement and vibration; then let us break up the surface of our frame in like fashion, avoiding long and parallel lines of light and shadow, symbolic of repose. Or where simple masses are in relation, where quietude, stillness, stability of conditions are to be felt, then the lines of the frame should be simple and continuous, the hollows throwing broad bands of shadow. Flat frames are adapted to pictures in which the planes are limited. Deep mounts and deep frames are devices to lead the eye into the picture, to assist roundness and perspective. The spacing at the top and bottom may be unequal. It is a common practice in the case of mounts to leave more distance beneath the print than above, but the principle may be extended to frames or panels of wood, giving an asymetrical arrangement that yield pleasure, perhaps because it is a tendency towards instability, a less pronounced geometrical balance.

The mottles and streaks of some woods used in the natural states will obviously fulfil the conditions of surface variety and emphasis of lines supplied by added ornament to plainer forms. It may on occasion be agreeable to augment the significance ofparallel lines in a picture by similar lines in the frame running in the same rather than a "correcting" direction.

Whatever is done, however, must be done with exceeding reticence and lightness of hand. Whether diversity of surface is sought in inlay, in *gesso*, in natural markings or incised-ornament, it must be remembered that we are dealing with an art in which the characteristics of salient line or rounded form are never strongly marked as they may be in hand work; the echo, in other words, must be of the faintest.

Decision on the tone of a frame, if it is to be higher or lower than the surrounded picture, is a point equally as important as the colour. A single trial quickly teaches the veriest beginner that a print that is right on a dark mount is much too dark for a light one. A dark surrounding is a powerful aid in conveying the feeling of daylight and sunshine in a landscape, while in some instances a frame lighter than the ground of the print will strike us as admissible and pleasing, the picture being usually a composition whose decorative qualities we wish to appeal. The colour may seldom be pure white; a creamy or ochreous white is better, and will mate well with sepia and carbon red. A critic lately has somewhat jeered at the approximation of style that he alleges is taking place in exhibition frames. Who originated the idea of empannelling the photograph in dark stained wood I do not know; the fact remains that it is accepted by general consent as best fulfilling the requirements. The colours, which with more powerful pictures might be more pronounced, are indescribable blendings of grey, umber, green, and soft black; the dark tones do not betray the absence of light that is a notorious fault in photographs. The shapes in vogue are simple, and do not attract undue attention.

Mr. Hollyer perhaps first popularised the style when he surrounded his pre-Raphaelite reproductions with a margin of green stained wood. Before leaving the subject of colour, it will be well to allude to the importance of trying effects with the unavoidable glass over the picture before being satisfied as to the harmony betwixt print and frame. Remember the print is under glass and the frame is not. Patent plate is as great an offender as the best ordinary sheet in the matter of colour, but glazing is indispensable, in the dirt-laden atmosphere of large towns anyway. Inattention to this seeming trifle may cause an unpleasant surprise, perhaps on the eve of sending to an exhibition.

The difficulty of describing to the frame-maker the colour required tends to send people to the few men who have colour patterns in stock. It is an advantage to do the staining oneself, an easy matter with Stephens' stains, which afford good colours, or the receipts in Spon's hand-books, logwood, indigo, potass. bichromate, liquid ammonia for darkening oak, pearlash and other alkalies may be pressed into service, and a rub with wax polish forms the best finish. A pleasant effect for a light frame is obtained by coating the smooth wood with a distemper of gilders' whiting and size slightly tinted with ochre. Gilding has also been made easy with transfer gold. Allusion must again be made to the Salon exhibition to point out the excellent object lessons it affords in this connection. The frames of one well-known worker north of the Tweed are always models of decorative unity. There is his little brown girl in an ivory white frame, on the right-hand side as we enter, and further on a new and ambitious adaptation of the design affected by the school associated with the name of Rossetti, having a predilla occupied with an illuminated quotation. Di[d] space permit, many other successful examples might [be] commented on.—*The Amateur Photographer.*

Portraiture by Flashlight.

By J. W. Wade.

Portraiture has long been the domain of the professional photographer, and will in a great measure remain so while he has the facilities of lighting and the conveniences of a studio, although the amateur with his makeshift appliances often breaks away from the conventional and produces some effect, which, though not at all in accord with the traditions of the art, has the charm of novelty and perhaps beauty, if he understands the principles of artistic composition and able to see with an artist's eye. In no case is this better exemplified than when artificial lighting is used, and especially when magnesium flash-light is the source of illumination.

To anyone with a spark of ingenuity the flash-light is capable of the most varied methods of application, and the mechanical arrangements are simple, convenient, and (what is of great importance to amateurs) portable.

It is, however, only those who are imbued with sufficient patience to overcome the first failures and to understand the conditions which are so different to daylight work, that it is given to know the wonderful capabilities of the process.

Of course, there are disadvantages (and when are there not ?), and the greatest of these, at least for home work, is the fumes and smoke from the magnesium. For some years I have not dared to use it at home fearing the domestic powers that be; about the mitigation of the smoke evil I shall speak of later. The portability of the apparatus is a great consideration even when using it in your own home, and more so when you are invited out to spend the evening with some friends with the addenda to the invitation "Can you bring your camera ?" It is not much to carry to a fancy dress ball, bazaar or charade party. I remember once taking a most interesting group of the most ragged urchins of the slums to whom I had been giving a lantern show. The camera was standing at one side, a little behind the screen, uncapped and unnoticed, and the flash was given in front of the white screen—the resulting picture is that of an audience of two or three hundred as they must have appeared watching with intense interest the pictures upon the screen.

Most of my work has been amongst members of the theatrical profession, and these, with perhaps the exception of professional models, make the best sitters. Not only are they able to assume an easy pose, but are able to withstand the sudden glare of the flash, without alteration of expression. Then, again, their costumes are generally suitable for this method of lighting, the texture of the silks and satins being admirably rendered, indeed much better than the more diffused daylight; but then it is not everyone who has the run of a theatre.

The most important point in practical work is the position of the lamps. Care must be taken that the light does not fall upon the lens, though it should be brought as near to the sitter as possible. It must not be so low as to shine directly into the eyes,

for very few persons can stand that without involuntary closing them. If placed too high the shadows under the eyebrows, nose, etc., are heavy and exaggerated, and the same if placed too much at one side. Not only do we get flat lighting if the light is placed in front, but also a peculiar grain on the negative.

About six or seven feet is a suitable height for a standing figure. In posing the head it is of importance to notice how the shadow of the nose falls upon the cheek. There should be a little shadow but not too much—a very slight variation in the position of the light or the figure often makes a great difference in the artistic qualities of the resulting picture.

The sitter should not use any powder or grease paint upon her face; for with the former the flash-light exaggerates any little inequalities, and with the latter unpleasant high lights are formed.

It is preferable to have the room in which the portrait is taken moderately small, painted or papered a light grey or with white draperies hung at each side of the sitter: and a large screen of white paper should be fixed behind the lamp, so as to serve as a reflector and to diffuse the light. If these precautions are taken it is almost unnecessary to use semi-transparent screens between the light and the sitter: in special cases a screen of translucent paper may be used. However, generally the most artistic effects are to be obtained with the full value of the light.

The background should be of an absorbent nature and in most cases dark; also the sitter should be placed far enough away from [illegible] as not to throw any shadow, or at least a distinct one.

The room should be well lighted by other lamps than those [illegible]sed for the exposure, not only to judge the position of the figure upon the ground glass, but it will materially aid the expression of the eyes during the exposure. To obtain a sharp focus the sitter should hold a lighted taper near to some printed paper.

I have rarely had any trouble with movement of the figure during the short duration of combustion, so a head-rest is unnecessary. Although a nervous sitter may start at the sudden flash, I have noticed it is quick enough to impress the plate with the smoke from a cigarette once a sitter did move. I was endeavouring to photograph the domestic cat by this means, and all I got was a streak across the plate, and the cat—well! I never saw it again for several days.

Many workers attach great importance to the kind of lamp they use, which I think is unnecessary; all that we require is one that will secure perfect combustion in the shortest space of time possible, and a little consideration will soon put us *en rapport* with our requirements. In my first attempts at flash-light work, the apparatus was simplicity itself; it consisted of a piece of tin, upon which was spread some magnesium powder spread upon a layer of gun-cotton, and this being touched with a lighted taper gave the flash.

The lamp I now use has been made for a few shillings at the local ironmonger's, and consists of a circular turn-table actuated by an elastic band which is wound round the stem and kept in position by a catch. Round the turn-table (the top of which is slightly concave), and a little below it, is a circular trough, about six inches diameter, containing tow saturated with methylated spirit: this, when lighted, surrounds the turn-table with flame. Upon the dish of the turn-table is placed about twenty grains of powdered magnesium, which, when the catch is released, is thrown through the flame on all sides, producing a light of large area. It is advisable to use two of the lamps, placed not more than twelve inches apart: if further than this the bright speck upon the pupil of the eye is enlarged or doubled, giving the sitter an unnatural stare. The two catches can be released at the same moment by one string, directly the time shutter on the lens is opened.

The difficulty before mentioned of getting rid of the fumes when operations are performed in an ordinary sitting-room, can to a great extent be obviated by placing the light somewhere near the window, and having above it a cardboard or tin cone and the smoke conveyed by a paper tube to the open window.

I must not forget to remind the reader that the magnesium powder must be kept dry, and is best stored in a well-stoppered bottle, as it absorbs moisture. Should the operator have many exposures to make, he will find that a pair of spectacles with plain blue [illegible] advantage. For full-length figures I use a RR [illegible]ure, and for heads a portrait lens. The plates should be of a most rapid kind, so as to secure detail in the shadows: theoretically [illegible] plates should be used, but I have found no advantage gained.

Plates exposed by the flash-light require a special method of development. I prefer the pyro and ammonia developer; and first soak the plate in a rather strong solution of ammonia for one minute, then apply the mixed developer with a minimum of pyro and plenty of ammonia, just a trace of bromide and double the quantity of water. The development will be slow and the image thin, but when full detail is obtained mix a fresh developer of the normal strength, and when applied the plate will rapidly gain in density, and a softly graded negative will be the result, which will repay the operator for all the patience he has expended upon it.—*The Photographic Review.*

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